

February 17, 2007



DAGGER'S EDGE

IRAQ EDITION: VOLUME 1 ISSUE 8
















"The Greatest Brigade Combat Team Ever Formed"





DAGGER'S EDGE

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Dagger Vision

The Dagger Brigade Combat Team will be trained and ready, fully deployable, disciplined, confident, dedicated and serving selflessly with pride.

We are caring of one another and sensitive to the needs of our Soldiers, family members and DA civilians.

We communicate accurately across the chain of command and work together as a combined arms team of teams.

We are responsible stewards of our Nation's treasure.

We are professionals and ambassadors of our Nation and responsible and respected guests in the Schweinfurt Community, and wherever we find ourselves.

We are flexible, motivated and fully capable of executing any assigned tasks to standard regardless of the challenges.

Picture Credits



(Cover Page) Sgt. 1st Class Larry Comfort keeps his guard while on patrol in Baghdad, Iraq (US Army photo by Capt. Matthew Angliss ,1st Battalion 7th Field Artillery Regiment.)





DAGGER'S EDGE

Commander's Net Call

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, DA Civilians and Family Members of the Dagger Brigade Combat Team.

The Troopers here are doing tremendous work every minute of every day in support of the Dagger BCT's campaign plan to increase security in Baghdad while simultaneously increasing the professional capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces.

You may have already heard about a new strategy in Baghdad which includes the establishment of Joint Security Stations (JSS) and Combat Outposts (COPs) out in the City and away from the big Forward Operating Bases (FOBs).

This is a necessary change to our tactics and our Soldiers are conducting themselves magnificently.

Dagger BCT Soldiers from each of our four Maneuver Task Forces have deployed away from the major FOBs and have occupied COPs within the most challenging areas of sector. These COP and JSS locations were selected based on their ability to reduce the ongoing sectarian violence by providing a continuous, disciplined presence along the sectarian fault lines.


More importantly, these Combat Outposts place our Soldiers alongside our Iraqi Partners among the Iraqi Citizens who need the security we can provide in order to give Iraq a chance. This is exactly the type missions that our great Soldiers are



COL. J.B. Burton discusses the development of the Joint Security Station with an Iraqi National Police Commander.

trained and equipped for.

Is it going to work? I firmly believe that the approach the Dagger BCT has taken is exactly what must be done to reduce the sectarian violence and improve the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces which in turn will provide the Government and people of Iraq a chance.

Everywhere you turn; our great Troopers are fully engaged in the mission. Of specific note, our great 299th Forward Support Battalion continues its tireless efforts to provide the support and supplies necessary for this aggressive endeavor. The Life Line Soldiers are doing some heavy lifting in support of this great BCT. They are doing multiple tasks simultaneously, with many Soldiers executing missions well outside of their Military Occupational Specialty. And they execute every mission with the precision and discipline that Dagger BCT Soldiers are known for. So to the Life Line Battalion and all of its great Soldiers—The entire DAGGER BCT renders a heartfelt THANK YOU for all that the Life Line Troopers do every day to make ours the Greatest Brigade Combat Team Ever Formed. 



A Lifeline convoy prepares to roll out on a night mission to deliver barrier materials for Dagger BCT combat outposts



DAGGER'S EDGE



Staying Connected While We Are Strangers In A Strange Land

Story By CH (Capt.) Thomas Kirchhoefer

I have one of the greatest jobs in the Dagger Brigade! As a Catholic Chaplain, and one of only a handful in the Baghdad area, I get to regularly visit most of the forward operating bases around Baghdad. Traveling with Spc. Ian Harris, the Chaplain Assistant and my fellow Religious Support Team member with the 9th Engineers, we regularly visit almost all of the TF Gila Soldiers and most of the Dagger Brigade Soldiers in our regular travels.

Most of the Soldiers we visit ask about what is going on back in their Battalion or at the Brigade. They are concerned about the other Soldiers in their unit and the friends that they know from Schweinfurt. Even as we are spread throughout the Baghdad area, everyone wants to know what is going on with the people they know and they want to stay connected. This is one of the greatest parts of my job as a Chaplain - to help Soldiers from my unit and other units to stay connected within the Dagger Bri-

gade.

When it comes to staying connected, I think about some of the great stories in the Bible. One of the best examples for all of us, who are now so far from home, is the story of Joseph - the son of Judah. Joseph was a great dreamer and an interpreter of dreams. If you remember, Joseph was sold off by his brothers into a foreign land. He believed in his dreams, and even as he found himself in a strange land, he knew God had a plan for him. One day, when his brothers

came to see him during a famine, he was in a position to help them. He did not hold what his brothers did against them, but he forgave them. Through this divine providence, he had the chance to reconnect with his family and especially with his father. When he had the opportunity, he seized it. Throughout the whole experience, he stayed true to himself and what he believed was right, even if others did not – even his own brothers.

As I visit our Soldiers, some talk to me about their personal concerns, especially about reconnecting or staying connected with people back home. There never seems to be enough time to stay connected with a spouse, children, parents, or people in Schweinfurt or other people spread all over the world. During this deployment, we have many chances to be more connected than people on previous deployments – most Soldiers have access to the internet, cell phones, instant messenger or so many of the other ways of staying connected.



Spc. Ian M. Harris (left) and CH (Capt.) Thomas Kirchhoefer, both of Headquarters Company 9th Engineer Battalion, wait to return from a Religious Support Mission. (US Army photo by Spc. Ian M. Harris)



CH (Capt.) Thomas Kirchhoefer (center), HHC 9E, talking with Capt. Tim Russell (left) the incoming commander of C Co., and Capt. Carl Dick the outgoing commander of C Co. from the organic C Co., 9th Engineers, before the Change of Command Ceremony on Jan. 31, in Ar Ramadi, Iraq. (US Army photo by Spc. Ian M. Harris)

(Chaplain Continued on page 9)





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2nd Brigade Combat Team

Dagger Brigade Has the most Soldiers Stay Army

Story By Sgt. 1st Class Keith Laird

More Soldiers in 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, have re-enlisted since last October than any other brigade in Multi-National Division—Baghdad.

Since 9/11 and the start of the War on Terror, military service has changed from a place to serve your country and earn an education, to a place to serve your country in a time of war, deploy to foreign countries to bring the fight to the enemy, and earn the right to call yourself a Veteran.

The Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, the Dagger Brigade, continuously show their dedication to their unit and the Army.

The Dagger Brigade has the great achievement of surpassing all other brigades in the greater Baghdad area when it comes to Soldiers choosing to Stay Army.

"2nd Brigade Combat Team has delivered more re-enlistments and more bonuses than any other brigade in MND-Baghdad," said Col. J.B. Burton, commander of the Dagger Brigade. "We have many challenges with Soldiers spread across the battle space, on nine separate Forward Operating Bases, but this outstanding retention team has met each one head on."

"Since the beginning of Oct. 2006, The Dagger Brigade Combat Team reenlisted more Soldiers than any other Brigade in the MND-Baghdad area," Sgt. 1st Class Robert Staley, the brigade's Senior Career Counselor. "There are many factors involved in our success. First of all we have the best retention team in the whole Army. The career counselors and retention Non-Commissioned Officers in this brigade keep our Soldiers well informed about their options and incentives that are available through reenlistment." Staley continues, "Of the 471 Soldiers who reenlisted, 155 of them opted to stay with the Dagger Brigade, and most chose to take advantage of the college incentive."

The college incentives are available to those who reenlist to stay with the Dagger Brigade. Under this program, Soldiers who reenlist for 12 months current station stabilization will be allowed to attend civilian college classes upon redeployment.

(2nd BCT Continued on page 18)



Spc Bryan Blackburn (center) reenlists on top of the Dagger Tower Nov. 11. Col. J.B. Burton (left) is the reenlisting officer and Spc. Andrea Smith holds the Dagger Colors. (US Army photo by Capt. David Levasseur, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO)



Sgt. 1st Class Arnold and Staff Sgt. Barkdull are awarded the Dagger Coin in recognition for outstanding performance in brigade retention services. They led the Dagger Brigade to have the highest number of Soldiers choose to Stay Army within the MND-Baghdad area. (US Army photo by Sgt. Lance Wail, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs)





DAGGER'S EDGE

Clearing The Way in Iraq

Story by Spc. Ian M. Harris



9th Engineers Gila

In World War II 9th Engineers fought under the 9th Armored Division and made first contact with the enemy in France. Heroically, they stood their ground at the Battle of the Bulge. They were the 'First to Cross' the

Rhine River over the Ludendorff Bridge, a feat that accelerated the downfall of Nazi Germany. Today the Soldiers of 9th Engineer Battalion follow in that tradition of Gila bravery, clearing the way on the streets of Baghdad.

One of many tasks of a combat engineer is to provide mobility on the battlefield. In today's war, the greatest obstacles to overcome are the roadside bombs emplaced by insurgents along the routes used by Coalition Forces. In response to this threat, 1st Plt., Co. A, of Task Force Gila conducts Dagger Iron-Claw missions, searching for and removing the bombs. Armed with route



Soldiers of 1st Plt. A Co. Task Force 9th Eng. study the Dagger Iron-Claw routes while 1st Lt. David MacPhail (far right) briefs the platoon on what to expect. (US Army photo by Spc. Ian M. Harris, HHC, 9th Engineer Bn.)

clearing vehicles such as the Buffalo and the RG-31, they patrol the streets with vigilance and determination.

1st Lt. David Macphail, Platoon Leader of 1st Plt., leads his team on missions almost daily. Their work begins hours before they ever leave the gate. Soldiers, such as Spc. Jay Elias, prepare for each mission by checking every radio, making sure the vehicles are operating properly, and cleaning every window. While they are equipped with tools and technology designed to help find bombs, the Soldiers of 1st Plt. still rely heavily on their own eyes. The streets of Baghdad are littered with garbage and rubble, making it difficult to distinguish a threat from simple trash.

To a novice, the task may seem daunting, but the Soldiers in 1st Plt. have with them the best tool of all -- experience. By patrolling the Dagger Brigade's area as often as they do, they are able to quickly recognize something that is out of place. If

(Gila...Continued on page 8)



1st Lt. David MacPhail of Co. A, Task Force 9th Eng. Scans the roadside for bombs while navigating his platoon through the streets of Baghdad. (US Army photo by Spc. Ian M. Harris, HHC, 9th Engineer Bn.)





DAGGER'S EDGE

Helping Iraqis

Story by Capt. William Schoenfeld

**2nd BCT BRT
Renegades**

Soldiers from Troop E, 4th United States Cavalry has been conducting Full Spectrum Combat Operations in the Mansur district of Baghdad since Nov. 5. One of the Troop's main focuses has been Stability and Support Operations. Troop E has made a lot of progress in this area by developing strong ties with the people in the neighborhoods in which the troop operates.

The Renegades have met with several school principals to develop a plan to better equip the students with the necessary supplies to achieve a first rate education. Troop E has supplied several schools with chalk boards and chalk for the schools' students to better visualize their teachers lessons. In addition to the chalk boards, the Renegades have



1st Sgt. David L'Elie gives a blanket to an Iraqi woman to help keep her family warm during the cold Baghdad winters. (US Army photo by Capt. William Schoenfeld, Troop E, 4th US Cav.)

provided the students with books, paper, pens, and pencils. They have received positive feedback from community leaders and students alike.

The Renegades routinely stop by local gathering places in different neighborhoods to conduct assessments of what the local population needs. They have found that aside from school supplies, the people in the surrounding neighborhoods need help staying warm during the cold Baghdad winters. The troop has worked with members of the Civil Military Operations department to provide blankets and heaters to low income families in Baghdad.

During their patrols, the Renegades make a point to let the local population know how much the Coalition Forces care about them and their children. They routinely hand candy out to kids and stop to pose for pictures with their adoring fans. In between photo shoots, the BRT hands out soccer balls so the kids have something to do after school lets out for the day.

2nd Brigade Recon Troop takes pride in the relationship they have developed with their Baghdad neighbors. They see this as a way ahead for all Coalition Forces to better bring stability to country of Iraq.



Staff Sgt. Nihyili Davis takes a moment during operations to have a photo taken with Iraqi children. (US Army photo by Capt. William Schoenfeld, Troop E, 4th US Cav.)





DAGGER'S EDGE



1-5 Cavalry Knights

Today is the Day

Story by CH (Capt.) Steven G. Rindahl

The president has announced his intent to send 21,500 more Soldiers to Baghdad. The new congress has announced their intent to block or minimize the surge. During all of these announcements the Soldier in sector has plenty of room to speculate. When will these new Soldiers arrive? Where will they go when they get here? What will they do when they get there? Will it really help? Once they are here who will replace us when it is time to leave? Will we get extended because of this? Is it possible for us to leave early? The questions about what tomorrow might bring can go on forever.

The Gospel reading for a recent Sunday sermon was Luke 4:14-21. In this passage Jesus read from a prophecy about when a deliverer, a messiah, would come and how it would be the day of good news, comfort, freedom, joy, and salvation. When he finished reading from the prophecy he told those assembled that the promised day had come. Today is the day. There was no use in looking to the past or speculating on the future any longer. It was now time to spread the good news.

As Soldiers we can take a lesson from this message. We cannot change what has already been done. We will not

be the ones that decide our date of re-deployment. But, we can make a lasting impact in what we do have control over – today. Today is the day for each of us to do the best we can. We have the opportunity today to train the Iraqi Security Forces and prepare them to take over tomorrow, whenever tomorrow actually comes. We have the opportunity today to make immediate positive differences in the lives of the local nationals. We have the opportunity today to invest effort and resources in the local economy improving the people's quality of life. In addition to our opportunities to improve the lives of the people of Iraq, we each have the opportunity to improve our own lives – today. We each have the opportunity today to sign up for Army correspondence courses. We each have the opportunity today to sign up for college courses through the education center or E-Army U. We each have the opportunity today to go to the many physical fitness centers on the camp. We each have the opportunity today to spend some time with the one we call God. Whether you desire to work for a stronger Iraq, stronger mind, stronger body, stronger spirit, or all of the above it can be done today. Make today your day.

May God grant you his strength and protection.



(Gila...Continued from page 6)

a bag looks suspicious or a pile of rubble appears where there used to be nothing, these Soldiers will notice and investigate further. They are also trained to recognize the telltales of different types of bombs. Most convoys maneuver to avoid these signs, but it is the Dagger Iron-Claw mission to seek out those threats and have them eliminated. No matter what mission lies ahead, Soldiers from Task Force Gila will be there to lead the way.



Pvt. 1st Class Travis Yazzie, of Co. A, Task Force 9th Eng., positions the Dagger Iron Claw to get a closer look at a possible bomb. (US Army photo by Spc Ian M.)





DAGGER'S EDGE




299th FRG

A Valentine for Your Sweetheart

Story by Wendy Sledd

Husbands, wives, and even children got in on the action and took advantage of the opportunity to make Valentine cards for 299th Forward Support Battalion Soldiers who are downrange.

Cardstock in pink, red, beige, and white formed the basis as kids painted, parents wrote the message, and others used heart-shaped paper punches, adhesive words of love, and stamps with ink to show their affection for their favorite Soldier. Nearly 500 cards were created so both married and single Soldiers alike would not be forgotten!

A special thank you to all of the ladies who stayed until the very end to ensure enough valentines were made so every Soldier received one. We appreciate your effort and the Soldiers will appreciate it even more! Happy Valentine's Day to you for being so special! 



Family members of 299th Forward Support Battalion, gathered to make Valentine's Day cards for nearly 500 Soldiers. (Photo by Mr. Frank Brenneman)



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Family members of 299th Forward Support Battalion, gathered to make Valentine's Day cards for nearly 500 Soldiers. (Photo by Mr. Frank Brenneman)

(Chaplain Continued from page 4)

Some Soldiers admit that they don't make a lot of effort to stay connected, and they want to blame others for not staying connected with loved ones. While we have these many opportunities, we still have to work at it.

It is my prayer that even as we are strangers in a strange land, so far from home and loved ones, you may see and believe that God had a purpose for you here at this time and in this place. Here in historic Iraq, we all can still learn, grow and deepen our relationships with one another and with our God.

May our own desert journey be as fruitful and joy-filled as so many have been throughout the scriptures. Finally, I pray that, like Joseph, you will search for the opportunities and make the effort and take advantage of the opportunities to stay connected and to even become more connected with your family and friends. 





DAGGER'S EDGE



299th FSB Lifeline

Charlie Company Converts Up Armored HMMWV to Ambulance

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Chick

Non-standard medical evacuation has been an integral part of the United States military MEDEVAC process since its inception. Although technological advances have allowed us

to greatly improve our methods of evacuation throughout the years, the main concept remains the same; evacuating casualties from the battlefield in the most expedient manner possible.

Upon deployment to Iraq, Company C, 299th Forward Support Battalion was equipped with two very different vehicle types to perform its ground evacuation mission. The first of these methods is the M113 tracked ambulance with add on armor. Although this armored tracked vehicle provides adequate protection to the crew and patients, its maximum speed is only 38 miles per hour on open ground and has limited maneuverability. This greatly limits its ability to keep up with its supported elements when attempting to maneuver around the battle space. The second of these vehicles is the M997 up armored wheeled



Sgt. 1st Class Chick demonstrates the proper positioning for the medic in the modified M1114. (US Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Diedre Williams)

ambulance. While providing improved evacuation time, a greater speed, and increased maneuverability, the M997 provides less protection.

A method to provide more armor and protection to its occupants has yet to be devised. Most methods that have been war-gamed would increase the center of gravity on this vehicle and making it more top heavy than it currently is. Due to the limitations of these two vehicles the identification of the need for a hybrid non-standard evacuation vehicle was made. A vehicle which combines the protection capabilities of the M113 with the speed and agility of the M997 is needed. The answer is an M1114 modified to be used as a ground ambulance.

The M1114 has been in limited production since 1996 and seen limited use in the Balkans before military deployment to the Middle East. This design has a larger, more powerful engine with a turbocharger and a



Shown here is the modified M1114 HMMWV with the capability to transport two litter patients while a medic begins treatment. (US Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Diedre Williams)

(299th Continued on page 13)





DAGGER'S EDGE



Task Force Justice
"...Tested in the
Crucible of
Combat."

Units from all over Baghdad are looking to stake their claim at FOB Justice. Once a small, quiet base, FOB Justice has now become a boom town attracting more units each day with its strategic location and quaint, but sufficient facilities.

FOB Justice is now home to Soldiers of Dagger Brigade, Transition Teams, Airborne Infantry, and Airborne Field Artillery. The mosaic of units requires constant communication and coordination to ensure a synchronized effort.

The Dining Facility will receive more Army cooks to support a headcount that has doubled in the last two weeks. Staff Sgt. Kevin Johnson, DFAC NCOIC and crew are up for the challenge. All support sections will maximize their potential in the coming months.

Where will all these people live? 1st Sgt. Anthony Pryor has to figure out the answer every day with the help of Staff




Cpl. William Huffman, 2-1 MP Platoon, served as site foreman for almost all barrier emplacement projects over the past two weeks. (US Army photo by 1st Lt. Cassidy Eaves)

Sgt. Brian Huntley. Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, has supported the influx by building tents protected by concrete barriers. The tent quarters come with power and climate control.

The newest commercial addition is the "Just-Us" Chai Shop. The name was given prior to the surge. The once cozy cow town is soon to become a thriving metropolis. Instead of sipping lemonade on a porch swing, Soldiers take their non-fat latte to go.

Even though it's a little tight these days, we welcome our new teammates and appreciate their upcoming contributions to the war and the people of Baghdad.

Friends and family of the Dagger Brigade, your concern and contributions are the pillars of our Soldiers' morale. Thank you for your invaluable support. 



1st Sgt. Anthony Pryor, Lt. Col. Steve Miska, Sgt. 1st Class Rodney Stanfield, and Capt. Jim Egan pose with owner Haji Yuad at the opening of the Just-Us Chai Shop. (US Army photo by Staff Sgt. John Garcia)





DAGGER'S EDGE



1-7 FA First Lightning

Currently there are 137 Soldiers of Company E, 134th Brigade Support Battalion attached to the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, safeguarding Camp Liberty. Among those Soldiers is an attached Infantry Platoon From Alpha Company 2-136 Combined Arms Battalion (CAB). The remainder of Co. E is spread across four Forward Operating Bases throughout Iraq, supporting elements of the 2-136 CAB. Most of these Soldiers are in Camp Taqaddum and Camp Fallujah in Al Anbar Province, while others are attached to units in Camp Anaconda and Tallil.

It all began August 15th, 2005, when Company E, 134th Brigade Support Battalion was formed at Camp Ripley, Minnesota. Company E, or the 'Enforcers', is a Forward Support Company for a Combined Arms Battalion in a Modular, Heavy Brigade Combat Team. Six weeks after being formed, the Enforcers mobilized 263 Soldiers and equipment then moved to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard. There is a mixture of specialties among the Enforcers, including wheeled and tracked vehicle mechanics, truck drivers, petroleum supply specialists, cooks, and electronics repair specialists. After six months of training, the En-



Mobile Vehicle and Cargo Inspection system (MVACIS) at an Entry Control Point with Ugandan security contractor in foreground. (US Army photo by Capt. Ben Wiener, Company E, 134th Brigade Support Battalion, attached to 1st Battalion 7th Field Artillery Regiment.)

Lightning Soldiers Provide Security for Camp Liberty

Story by Capt. Aaron Scheinman



Cpl. James Williamson uses the FIDO a portable explosives detector an Entry Control Point. (US Army photo by Capt. Ben Wiener, Company E, 134th Brigade Support Battalion, attached to 1st Battalion 7th Field Artillery Regiment.)

forcers were attached to the 2-136 CAB for deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Enforcers deployed to Camp Liberty, Iraq, and were attached to the 2-20 Field Artillery Battalion later replaced by the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment part of the Victory Base Defense Operations Center.

At Camp Liberty, Enforcers Soldiers are responsible for securing portions of the perimeter defense as well as controlling access to the Victory Base Complex by operating 2 Entry Control Points. The Soldiers operate several different types of specialized scanning equipment. The Mobile Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System is essentially a giant X-Ray machine for vehicles. It is used to look for contraband and explosive devices hidden in vehicles. A similar system, the "Z-backscatter" van, actually scans for explosives and other compounds using slightly different technology. Some Soldiers use the FIDO system to search vehicles for trace amounts of residue left after transporting or handling explosives. In personnel search areas the RapidsScan system is utilized, the same device is now being installed in some airports in the United States. It

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(1-7 FA Continued from page 12)

allows Soldiers to see if local Iraqi workers are carrying any concealed weapons or surveillance equipment. In our perimeter observation towers, the Long Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System is used to observe activity several miles away.



Sgt. Jerome Greene scanning his sector using the Long Range Advanced Scout surveillance system (LRASS). (US Army photo by Capt. Ben Wiener, Company E, 134th Brigade Support Battalion, attached to 1st Battalion 7th Field Artillery Regiment.)



During a joint patrol with the 3rd Brigade 6th Iraqi Army Division, Spc. David Hutcheson poses with Iraqi Army Soldiers. (US Army photo by Capt. Ben Wiener, Company E, 134th Brigade Support Battalion, attached to 1st Battalion 7th Field Artillery Regiment.)

2nd Platoon, "Outlaws", Alpha Company, 2-136 CAB conducts patrols with Charlie Battery 1-7 FA protected by upgraded armor, electronic warfare systems, and the Army's most advanced radios and satellite tracking systems.

Whatever the future brings, the Echo Company "Enforcers" and the Alpha Company "Outlaws" will be out in front leading the way. 

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strengthened suspension and boasts a fully armored passenger area protected by hardened steel and bullet-proof glass. With the ability to accelerate rapidly, the M1114 up armored HMMWV with a mounted crew served weapon not only offers faster and more effective non-standard MEDEVAC, but enhanced security as well.


Plans were obtained from another unit within theater of a M1114 modification to allow for ground evacuation. Two of Charlie Company's finest mechanics were given the daunting task of modifying a standard M1114 to be able to transport casualties. Sgt. 1st Class Dale Ford and Staff Sgt. David Massey installed a chain litter kit from an M113 armored ambulance into the M1114, giving it the capability to transport two litter casualties.

"It was significantly more difficult that we had anticipated. We actually had to fabricate some of the parts to make it work," Ford says, "But at the end of the day, I believe that it will be a very safe and effective method of evacuation."

tive method of evacuation."

The primary concern of installing a litter kit into such a small area was effective patient care. Ford took it upon himself to ensure that the Soldier providing patient care would have sufficient space to work on the injured Soldier while on route to the nearest medical facility.

"We wanted to make sure that the medics had enough room to work on their casualties. We installed the kit at such an angle that the medic could position himself in the front passenger seat at the head of the patient."

With casualty evacuation being a huge part of the medical mission in Iraq, the modified M1114 will be a great asset to the company evacuation mission. The combination of increased speed, mobility and protection that the modified M1114 provides will allow the quick and safe transportation of patients between levels of care with quality health care being provided enroute. 





DAGGER'S EDGE


**1-26 Infantry
Blue Spaders**

Operation Amherst: Baghdad

Story by 1st Lt. Matthew Waite

The target was known to have personal bodyguards, slept in a different place every night, and used his entire neighborhood as an early warning. All of these factors combined to make this one of the most difficult targets in all of Iraq.

The mission was handed down to Charlie Company 1-26 Infantry 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. The Company, known as "Rock" was assisted by the Battalion Scout Platoon "Recon". The men of Team Rock have proven themselves time and again as a very flexible and capable team and were an obvious choice for such a difficult mission.

Preparations and planning minimal due to the time sensitivity of the mission. Only a small amount of data existed on the objective site.

"To be honest all I had was a location, a name, and one shadowy picture of our target which we had no idea how long ago was taken," said Capt. Michael Baka, from Rush, New York, the Commanding Officer of Team Rock. He added, "We developed a quick plan, did a map recon of the AO, and disseminated the information to our Soldiers. All of this took us about an hour, which was really all we had time for."



Pvt. 1st Class Nicholas Humphrey, from Whitney Point, NY, of Scout Platoon Pulling Security as the assault begins. (US Army photo by 1st Lt. Matthew Waite)

1st Sgt. Kenneth Hendrix, from Benton, Ark., Rock's top enlisted man added, "We've done this quite a few times before and have it down to a battle drill."

The mission took place several kilometers from Team Rock's area of operations where there are minimal patrols by the Iraqi Army and none by American forces. Team Rock was being tasked with conducting a raid right into the heart it.

"The early warning system for these guys is pretty good, they know if Americans are moving around in their backyard," said Sgt. 1st Class Widmark Quashie the Platoon Sergeant for the Scallywags from the Bronx, New York. He continued, "So we knew we'd have to move in as quickly as possible under blackout conditions." The main route brought the company through unfamiliar terrain and twisting streets which they expertly navigated and drove using only their night vision devices.

The mission, codenamed Operation Amherst, kicked off at 1:30 A.M. on the morning of Dec. 17. The Scallywags were

(Blue Spaders...Continued on page 15)



3rd Platoon, Team Rock moves towards the initial breach. (US Army photo by 1st Lt. Matthew Waite)





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(Blue Spaders...Continued from page 14)

leading, with the Recon element along with the Company Commander following behind while Team Rock's First Platoon, known as Cobra, provided rear security. The patrol came upon an illegal checkpoint which had roadblocks setup to block the path of traffic.

"Most of the vehicles we were traveling in were M1151 Humvees and those road blocks

obstacle forcing it out of the path.


"It was big but we were bigger," he said afterwards.

With the path now clear and the infiltration spotted by the enemy it was apparent that the convoy had to move quickly.

1st Lt. Matthew Waite, from Alexandria, Va., the Platoon Leader of the Scout Platoon said, "We were coming in pretty quick but when I saw a gate I realized that would actually help us.

All I had to do was say 'White Gate!' and my driver knew exactly what I wanted. We took down the gate and most of the wall around it before backing up." The breach team was out of the truck within seconds and stacked on the wall. Just as the original stack team moved into the breach the second team was already moving in. Meanwhile, the picture was quite different from several thousand feet in the air. A Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle was monitoring the action from above.

"There were a lot of people in high places that were very interested in this one," reported the Executive Officer,

Capt. Curtis Brooker, from Birmingham, Ala. The Brigade LNO, who had been watching from the TOC, later said the breach was expertly done. With the High Value Target secured and dawn approaching, Charlie Rock loaded up and headed home. Once again, the Soldiers displayed the professionalism and flexibility of the 1-26th Infantry and specifically the Charlie Rock team which has become a common occurrence in the difficult struggle for Baghdad. 



Members of 1st Squad, Scout platoon make their way to the rooftop. (US Army photo by 1st Lt. Matthew Waite)

could definitely slow us down enough that the target would be able to escape, especially since they must have now known we were rolling around where we shouldn't be," said 2nd Lt. Matthew Martinez, from Santa Barbera, Calif., the Platoon Leader for the Scallywags. He ordered Staff Sgt. Cunningham's Bradley to clear the route and push the obstacles off the road. The driver for that vehicle was Pvt. 1st Class Carlos Perez, from Salines Calif. He gunned the engine and rammed into the



STAY DAGGER STAY ARMY ARMY STRONG





DAGGER'S EDGE



2-12 Cavalry Thunder Horse

Living in the Neighborhood has Advantages

Story by 2nd Lt. Mike Daschel

Iraqi Army and US Army Soldiers are based at a combat outpost in central Ghazaliya as part of a new strategy in fighting the insurgency in Baghdad. The outpost, staffed by as many as one hundred Soldiers, has been operating for the past two weeks with Soldiers from Company C, Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment.

The outpost's construction, which was planned well before a new strategy of living in the neighborhoods was announced, is the first of its kind in Baghdad.

Combat Outpost Casino, as it is officially known, is surrounded by concrete barriers and includes six houses. Three of the houses belong to the Iraqi Army and three to U.S. forces. A large field is also enclosed within the perimeter of barriers to eventually park vehicles in.

Soldiers sleep in crowded rooms with no heating, and have no running sewage system, but outhouses they have built and service themselves. In addition to combat patrols, Soldiers travel to Camp Liberty daily to conduct their own logistical missions such as refueling and supplying food.



Spc. Robert Thompson, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, from Gastonia, N.C., provides security from a rooftop in the Ghazaliya combat outpost compound. (US Army Photo by 2nd Lt. Mike Daschel)

Being based in Ghazaliya has seen its share of success stories. Just days after moving in, Cpl. Peter Callahan, a medic, saved the life of a four-year-old girl who was brought in by her family with a pulse below forty beats per minute. After checking her wounds and giving her initial aid, Soldiers evacuated the girl and her mother to a medical center for further treatment. During a patrol in Ghazaliya, Spc. John Laweryson, who was driving a HMMWV, spotted suspicious looking vehicle. One of the men inside was acting strangely.

"I thought either he was wounded, or trying to hide something," Spc. Laweryson said. "The vehicle turned around like they were trying to slip away from our patrol and our guys blocked them. They then scattered on foot and dispersed into a building."

When the vehicle was searched, a kidnap victim was found in the trunk of the car with his hands bound together. He was taken to the outpost and after two days, his father finally arrived to take him home in a very emotional reunion.

(2-12 Cav. Continued on page 19)



The highest rooftop at the Ghazaliya combat outpost provides a good view of the surrounding neighborhood in western Baghdad. (US Army photo by 2nd Lt. Mike Daschel)





DAGGER'S EDGE



1-18 Infantry Vanguards

Tip From Local Resident Leads to the Discovery of a Weapons Cache

Story by Capt. Phil Hensel

Iraqi National Police and U.S. Soldiers conducted a raid in the southwest portion of the nation's capital, after receiving a tip from a local citizen.

Elements of the 1st Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police and 1st

Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, the Vanguards, responded to a tip from a local citizen and conducted a hasty raid Feb. 2, in the Sadiyah neighborhood in south-west Baghdad.

During the raid, the Vanguard Soldiers pulled outer security while the National Police entered and cleared the area. The National Police found a cache consisting of bomb making material and multiple rocket-propelled grenades.

This raid and many like it disrupt the operations of the terrorist and insurgents and take lethal weapons out of their hands and off of the streets. Just as important, the close cooperation between the Vanguards and the INP demonstrates essential progress in developing the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF.) The competence and ability dem-

onstrated by the INP illustrates the overall improvement in the ISF that has resulted from the efforts of the Vanguards to partner with the local security forces.

The tip that led to the capture of the cache is also a success story. The willingness of locals to take responsibility for the security of their area, and turn in those who are conducting acts of violence is an absolutely essential step in creating a secure and civil society in Iraq. The tip is also notable, because it shows a degree of trust between not only local civilians and Coalition Forces, but also between local civilians and the INPs. As the Vanguards continue to partner with the ISF, one of the top goals is to increase the credibility of the ISF with the local populace. The willingness and inherent trust of local nationals to come forward to the INP demonstrates that the credibility gap that separates the ISF from some of the Iraqi people is decreasing.



★ ★ ★ ★ Question Of the Week ★ ★ ★ ★

"Who is your Valentine?"

299th FSB

Sgt Dawn Thompson



"Sam is my valentine."

1-5 CAV

Spc Ross



"My valentine is my wife, Miriam."

299th FSB

Spc Cynthia Brown



"My kids, Azaria and Amaya, are my valentines."

A 1-7 FA

Sgt Allenpaul Navalta



"Michelle Navalta, my wife, is my valentine."

1-5 CAV

Cpl John Androski



"My wife, Rachael, is my valentine."





DAGGER'S EDGE

Voice, Keeping Busy

Story by Staff Sgt. Randy Schultz



57th Signal Dagger's Voice

The last couple of weeks a lot has been going on here at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Spc. Bryan Blackburn continues to lead the way with Video Tele-Conferencing. He has set up three in the past two weeks for the Soldiers families back home with more on the way. Staff Sgt. Randy Schultz has been up at

Camp Taji helping the new addition to the Dagger family 1-325 AIR in the setup of their CPN and CPOF systems. 1st Sgt. Woody Carter's Virtual Soldier Program has been going strong; helping all leaders become more proficient in their leadership traits. The Non-Commissioned Officers have one hour per week on Friday nights to ask questions and give their opinions on certain situations.

Sgt. 1st Class Walter Branyan, Spc. Andrea Smith, Spc. Mary McMahon, and Spc. Anthony Jones ensured that the Dagger Inn DFAC has telephone service by running cables and coordinating with outside units to provide the necessary means to communicate in case of an emergency.

Pvt. 1st Class Anthony Meadows remains diligent for JNN 68 by wiring up the 299th FSB motor

pool for telephone and internet service. Again, the 57th Signal Company leads the way with reenlistments from Staff Sgt. Dennis Cauch, Pvt. 1st Class Estevas Nieves, and Staff Sgt. Robert Kerkula.



Staff Sgt. Dennis Cauch received his reenlistment certificate from Col. J. B. Burton, commander of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. (US Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Walter Branyan, 57th Signal Company)

The last few weeks the server room, consisting of Spc Karen Ewell, Spc Jennifer Bersley, Spc. Phillip Smith, and Mr. Shoji Iwata, have been doing an outstanding job with all the tasks they are given. They are not just running all the servers, they also run and maintain our downrange media server with over 2000GB of information. 🇺🇸

(2nd BCT Continued from page 5)

"For those who re-enlist to stay with their same unit, 30 percent is considered to be an indicator of high moral with in a unit," said Staley, "We are currently at 43 percent who choose to stay with the Dagger Brigade.. We are doing something right."

Sgt 1st Class Cole Arnold, a brigade career counselor, says, "The most gratifying aspect about my job is when a Soldier has no plan, dead set on separating from the Army, but ends up reenlisting after many hours of counseling knowing he/she made the right decision."

"I think we are so successful because every Soldier is asked to reenlist to stay with the Dagger Team," says Staff Sgt. Gabriel Barkdull, "They are constantly kept informed of all options and incentives. I don't stop negotiating with the Retention Management Branch at DA until I fulfill their assignment requests."

The Dagger Retention Team is working hard to ensure everyone who wants to reenlist knows what options are available and what the Army will give them to stay in. 🇺🇸





DAGGER'S EDGE

Keeping Fit

Story by Staff Sgt. Lucas Johnson

**C 101 MI
Cobras**

As the alarm clock blares, the Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Soldiers roll out of their beds and grumble incoherently. As part of the every day routine the Soldiers in the TUAV platoon start the day off with a good workout in the gym. No one is forcing them to go; some are

doing it for personal reasons, other for their loved ones, and others just to keep in good condition.


In the early morning hours Staff Sgt. Johnson, Spc. Cory Galloway, and Spc. Bermond Lane find themselves doing the 'airborne shuffle' to the gym in order to escape the chilly morning temperatures. Once they arrive it's nothing but business as they push their bodies and each other. Since they've been deployed the men have been working out for at least an hour a day. Spc. Galloway is attempting to leave Iraq at a solid 180 pounds. He started this long journey off at a respectable 135 pounds and has thus far been able to add 30 pounds of muscle to himself. Grinning to himself as he stands triumphantly on the scale, Spc. Galloway proclaims that he's never weighed more than 160 pounds in his life and he can't wait to go home on leave and impress his wife Erin. Meanwhile Johnson and Lane continue to work on getting toned and do more reps than heavy lifting.

Later on in the early afternoon, Sgt. Jason Kudla, Spc. James Bryan, and Spc. Darren Franklin rub their eyes as they emerge from their


rooms blinded by the sun like moles. With a strong will and determination, Spc. Bryan is trying to bulk up and join the 400 pound bench press club by the end of the deployment. Kudla has been working on getting in better shape to prepare himself for the Warrant Officer Candidate School for when he puts his application packet in at the end of his tour in Iraq. Off to the side you'll find Franklin working out doing his rehabilitation exercises that his physical therapist has taught him.

Finally, around the time that most spouses are finally able to lie down and relax after a long day of taking care of your families (which we all love and thank you for), you'll find Sgt. Joseph Livingston, Spc. Wah Sun Sitman, and Spc. Jason Glenn trotting off to the gym. Livingston and Sitman have been lifting in order to get toned, while Glenn has been working on gaining mass. Using a workout routine that Glenn's father sent him they are consistently lifting more weight each week as their bodies gain more mass.

Don't worry about these Soldiers getting too big though, they've also got a good cardio program in place. Running down the road along the motor pools, using the exercise bikes or using the elliptical machines these guys are sweating off the pounds. Because there is not a set running course that Soldiers must run on you'll find the TUAV platoon running all over Camp Liberty.

The TUAV Soldiers definitely have their heads in the game when it comes to staying in shape. As the saying goes, "Although round is a shape, it's not the shape that you want to be." 

(2-12 Cav. Continued from page 16)

The combat outpost is a work in progress, waiting for more materials to finish the construction completely; however, it is fully operational. Security is provided by Soldiers from the rooftop throughout the day and the majority of the Soldiers of Company C spend their time there, conducting logistical operations and combat patrols. 





DAGGER'S EDGE



Soldiers from the Dagger Brigade have their picture taken with General Peter Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the Army, after a reenlistment ceremony. Gen. Schoomaker was the reenlisting officer during a visit to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. (US Army photo by Sgt. Lance Wall, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

' THE GREATEST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM EVER FORMED.'

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2nd BCT Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj.
John Fortune

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Dagger's Edge Editor in Chief

1st Lt. Katharine Smith

Dagger's Edge Editor and Photographer

Sgt. 1st Class Keith Laird

Dagger's Edge Design

Coordinator and Photographer

Sgt. Lance A. Wall



We are looking for any type of submissions to include:
letters, articles, comic strips or artwork,
and photographs.

If you would like a copy of this issue please
contact your Battalion UPAR

2-12 Cav: 2nd Lt. Michael Daschel

1-5 Cav: Capt. Cruz Rivera

TF Justice: 1st Lt. Cassidy Eaves

299th FSB: Capt. Aimee Ruscio

9th Eng.: 1st Lt. Christina Kessler

1-7 FA: Capt. Warrick Craig

57th Signal: 1st Lt. Harvey

CONTACT US!

HHC, 2BCT, 1ID

ATTN: PAO

Camp Liberty
APO, AE 09344

Katharine.Smith@mnd-
b.army.mil

Keith.Laird@mnd-b.army.mil

This Edition can also be found
online at
www.2bct.1id.army.mil

1-18 IN: Capt. Phil Hensel

1-26 IN: Capt. Jared Purcell

1-77 AR: Capt. Sean Bolling

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